SUICIDE SQUAD:
THE DRAGON'S HOARD
SUICIDE SQUAD
54
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ISHERWOOD
KESEL '91
FREE FALL!
OSTRANDER
YALE
ISHERWOOD
CAMPANELLA

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G-6242

BRAAP!
<CAPTAIN ZIUKO! MIKHAIL IS DOWN!>
BRAAAP!
<LEAVE HIM! WE HAVE NO TIME!>

BRAAP!
BDOW!
BRAAP!

BUDDA-BUDDA!
BRAAAP!

<COMRADE COMMANDER! THE RUSSIAN PRISONERS HAVE ESCAPED!>
<YES. IT WAS A LITTLE HARDER TO ARRANGE THAN WE THOUGHT, BUT THEY DID GET AWAY.>

<HOPEFULLY, THEY WILL FIND THIS *TIDEWATER* WHO KNOWS WHERE THE STOLEN CACHE OF WEAPONS--THE *DRAGON'S HOARD*--IS. AND THEY WILL COME BACK FOR THE GUNS. AND THE MAN IN THEIR RANKS THAT WE BROKE WILL TELL US.>
<AND *THEN* WE CAN KILL THEM ALL.>
2

TOKYO. NOW.
AMANDA WALLER'S SUITE.
GLAD YOU ALL MADE IT THIS TIME. TRUST EVERYBODY'S LUGGAGE ARRIVED AS WELL.
SOUTHERN CROSS SALVAGE COMPANY
OI! WALL! WHAT THE BLOODY HELL DID YOU PACK, EH?
WHAT'S ALL THIS, EH? YER GIRDLES?
WHAM
STREWTH!
WHUDOOM!

YOU DRUGGED ME!!!

WELL, OF COURSE I DID!
I WASN'T ABOUT TO TAKE A PLANE RIDE WITH YOU OTHERWISE.

I KILL YOU FOR THAT!

GREAT THING ABOUT A LASER GUN. YOU CAN USE THE BEAM TO SIGHT OR TO DRILL.
HEY, MRS. WALLER--YOU WANT ME TO POKE A HOLE THROUGH THIS GUY'S BRAIN?

LET'S SEE IF HE HAS ONE FIRST.
WELL, GORT? YOU GOT ANY BRAINS? YOU WANT TO KEEP THEM? YOU MAYBE WANT TO SIT DOWN AND COOPERATE?
COMRADE GORT WILL BE JOINING US FOR THIS ONE MISSION, AFTER WHICH HE WALKS, ASSUMING HE--AND WE--SURVIVE OUR PARTNERSHIP.
IN THE MEANTIME, HERE'S THE SKINNY--OR AT LEAST ALL THAT OUR EMPLOYER, MR. FUJIWARA, KNOWS.
"IT STARTED IN AFGHANISTAN. A SOVIET VET--CAPTAIN VLADIMIR ILLYITCH ZIUKO--AND HIS TEAM, INSTEAD OF RETURNING TO RUSSIA, MADE A DEAL WITH AN AUSTRALIAN NAMED TIDEWATER.
"EVER HEAR OF HIM, DOWN UNDER?"

"BLOODY HELL, WALL! AUSTRALIA'S A BIG PLACE, INNIT? EVEN PAUL-BLOODY-HOGAN DON'T KNOW 'EM ALL!"

"JUST ASKED. ANYWAY, THIS ZIUKO AND HIS MEN WENT AWOL, KILLED SOME OTHER SOVIET SOLDIERS, AND TOOK A LARGE SHIPMENT OF RUSSIAN AUTOMATIC WEAPONS TO SELL ON THE OPEN MARKET."

"SPECIFICALLY, *THIS* OPEN MARKET--HERE IN JAPAN. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE *YAKUZA*. MOST SPECIFICALLY, A CLAN CALLED THE *DAICHI DOKU*.

"SHAW HERE HAS A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WITH THESE GUYS. THEY RECENTLY TRIED TO JUMP HIM AND EVE. THEY GOT A META-HUMAN MARTIAL ARTIST WITH THEM THESE DAYS CALLED *CASSENE*. HE'S A *NASTY* BOY."

THE GUNS--WHICH ARE NICKNAMED THE *DRAGON'S HOARD*--ARE SOMEWHERE IN CAMBODIA. OUR ASSIGNMENT IS TO FIND THEM, KEEP THEM FROM FALLING TO THE YAKUZA, AND BREAK UP THE RING.

IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY. THE YAKUZA KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE, EVIDENTLY, AND THIS IS *THEIR* TURF.

ZIUKO AND HIS MEN HAVEN'T BEEN SEEN FOR AWHILE, BUT TIDEWATER'S HERE NEGOTIATING A DEAL.

QUESTION. IF RUSSIANS ARE INVOLVED, MIGHT WE RUN INTO ZASTROW AND HIS RED SHADOWS?

IF SO--HOW FAR CAN WE TRUST *STALNOI VOLK* HERE?

IT'S POSSIBLE WE'LL SEE ZASTROW. OUR AIMS ARE NOT INCOMPATIBLE. BUT IT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

HOW FAR *CAN* WE TRUST YOU, GORT?

I GO BACK TO USSR. RED SHADOWS GET IN MY WAY, I KILL THEM.
YOU GET IN MY WAY, I KILL YOU.
SOUNDS SINCERE TO ME. OKAY, GORT, YOU AND VERTIGO AND DEADSHOT--
--LAWTON. I KILLED DEADSHOT.
DID YOU? ALL RIGHT. GORT AND VERTIGO AND LAWTON ARE GOING TO PARACHUTE INTO CAMBODIA. I WANT YOU NEAR AT HAND WHEN WE GET THE HOARD'S EXACT LOCATION. BLACKHAWK EXPRESS WILL TAXI YOU IN.
HOW DO WE FIND OUT WHERE THE GUNS ARE?
A COUPLE DIFFERENT ROUTES, EVE. BEN AND SHAW HERE WILL INFILTRATE THE DAICHI DOKU HQ, SEE IF THEY KNOW WHERE THE HOARD IS YET--OR WHERE TO FIND TIDEWATER.
TIDEWATER'S BEEN SEEN ON THE GINZA. DOWN UNDER, YOU'RE TO MAKE THE ROUND OF THE BARS, SAY YOU'RE TIDEWATER--OR HIS BROTHER, IF THEY ALREADY KNOW HIM. SEE IF YOU CAN PICK HIM UP.
BEAUTY! AT LAST, SOMETHING THAT MAKES USE OF ME TALENTS!
CARMICHAEL, YOU'LL GO ALONG WITH BOOMER-BUTT. SIT NEAR HIM BUT NOT WITH HIM. WHEN HARKNESS MAKES CONTACT, YOU USE YOUR POWER TO GET TIDEWATER TO TELL YOU WHERE THE GUNS ARE.
I CAN'T. YOU TOOK THAT POWER AWAY FROM ME, REMEMBER?

YOU HAVE THE POWER, REMEMBER? YOU JUST GET A SEVERE HEADACHE WHENEVER YOU TRY TO USE IT. IT'S A FEEDBACK PROGRAM IN YOUR HEAD.
ORACLE WILL BE MONITORING YOU AND, AT THE SIGNAL, SHE'LL LIFT THE PROGRAM LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO GET THE INFO. OF COURSE, YOU PLAY ANY GAMES AND SHE'LL CRISP YOUR CHIPS.
YOU'LL ALL GET ONE OF THESE. MINIATURE TRANSCEIVERS, LINKED ONLY TO ORACLE, WHO WILL HANDLE LIAISON.
WHAT'S MY ASSIGNMENT?
GET IN AND OUT OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY WITHOUT BEING SEEN. IF ZASTROW'S HERE, I WANT TO KNOW IT AND WHO HE'S GOT WITH HIM. WORD IS THE SHADOWS ARE ALL NEW.
I'M SUPOSED TO HAVE A CHAT WITH OUR EMPLOYER. EVERYONE REVIEW THE DATA IN THESE ASSIGNMENT FOLDERS AND THEN LET'S GET CRACKING. LOTS TO DO.
"NIGHTSHADE, YOU ESPECIALLY NEED TO MOVE FAST. I REALLY NEED TO KNOW IF ZASTROW'S IN ON THIS CLAMBAKE."
YOU SPEAK NO RUSSIAN, YES? I SPEAK NO JAPANESE. SO WE BOTH TALK ENGLISH, YES?
HOKAY.
YOU ASK FOR MEETING, HOKAY? SO--WHY? WHO YOU? WHAT WANT?

I AM KGB. WE KNOW STOLEN SOVIET WEAPONS ARE TO BE SOLD TO YOUR CLAN.
THE WEAPONS ARE OF NO IMPORTANCE. WE REQUIRE, HOWEVER, YOU TURNING OVER TO US PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SALE.

YOU CRAZY MAN! WHAT YOU DO IF WE DO NOT AGREE ? SEND OLD LADY ON US ?

YES.
<MRS. GRADENKO. NOW. LEAVE A MESSENGER.>

SNARRL!

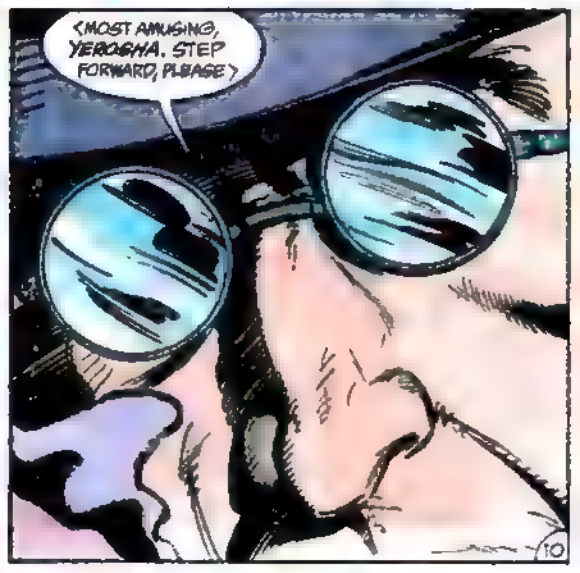
GRAHHR!
SNARRL!

GRAWLL!
GRAAAH!
AIEEE!

(NO NO, NOT THIS ONE YOU DID LEAVE ME ONE, DID YOU NOT, MRS. GRADENKO?)
(AH! THIS ONE!)

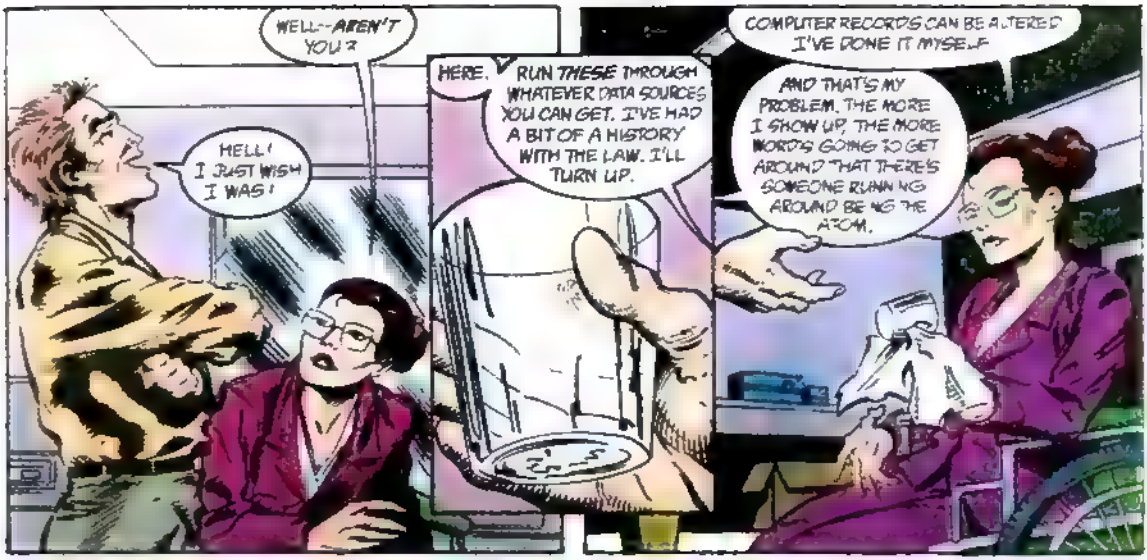
SO. YOU TAKE MESSAGE TO YOUR ... OYABUN. THIS IS CORRECT WORD FOR YOUR LEADER, YES? YES.
YOU SAY TO YOUR OYABUN THAT HE WILL GIVE US THE DEAD MEN—THE RUSSIANS WHO CREATE DRAGON'S HOARD, YES? OR WE COME LOOKING FOR YOU, YES? YES. GOOD.

HURM.


(MOST AMUSING, YEROSHA. STEP FORWARD, PLEASE)

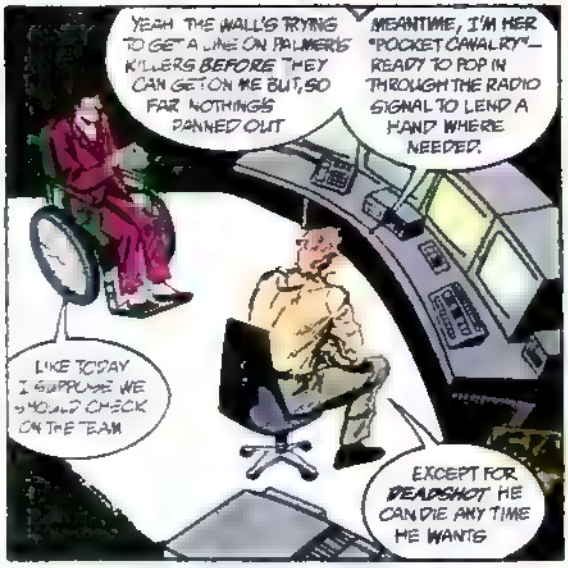
(HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?)
(AS USUAL, YOU FAIL WITH DETAILS. YEROSHA GORTCAGT NO SHADOW. ALSO, I KNOW STALNOVOLK. HE IS NOT QUITE AS BIG AS YOUR IMAGE MADE HIM.)
(MRS. GRADENKO DIDN'T REACT; YOU CAN ONLY AFFECT ONE PERSON AND ONE SENSE AT A TIME. SIMPLE.)
("TROUBLEMAKER" IS A STUPID CODE-NAME. WHY DO I HAVE TO USE IT? MRS. GRADENKO DOESN'T HAVE ONE!)
(MRS. GRADENKO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND CODE-NAMES SO SHE IS SIMPLY... MRS. GRADENKO. YOU ARE A TROUBLEMAKER. ANATOLI FEODOROVITCH KALININ, SO I CALL YOU ONE. YOU ANNOY ME.)
(ANNOY ME TOO MUCH AND I'LL FEED YOU TO SCHREK. HE IS GETTING HUNGRY AGAIN. DID YOU KNOW?)
TOKYO AIRPORT.
(SO, TATSUYAMAHIRO. YOU HAVE NOT BEEN BACK TO NIPPON IN SOME TIME?)
(NO OBLIGATIONS HAVE UNFORTUNATELY KEPT ME FROM HOME.)
(WHAT BUSINESS BRINGS YOU BACK AT THIS TIME?)
(OBLIGATION. I HAVE TO ATTEND A FUNERAL. A SORT OF COUSIN.)
(HE WAS MURDERED...)

THE INSTITUTE FOR META-HUMAN STUDIES
SO-- YOU'RE THE NEW ATOM
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME NAMES ADAM CRAY
SO--HOW DID YOU GET TO BE THE NEW ATOM? I MEAN, HOW DID YOU GET THE POWERS?
PALMER GAVE HIS OLD SHAPE-CHANGING BELT TO HIS EX-WIFE'S NEW HUSBAND WALLER HEARD ABOUT IT AND GOT ME RELEASED FROM PRISON TO GO STEAL IT
I'M A CAT BURGLAR--THAT'S HOW I GOT IN PRISON ANYWAY. WALLER HAD USES FOR SOMEONE WITH THE ATOM'S ABILITIES --SO I WENT AND TOOK IT. THE OTHER JOKER MAY NOT EVEN KNOW IT'S GONE
THEN IT'S JUST A CON RAY PALMER GOT KILLED WHEN HIS APARTMENT BLEW UP
LET ME GUESS I THINK I CAN SEE THIS ONE COMING
YOU THINK I'M REALLY RAY PALMER DON'T YOU?


WELL--AREN'T YOU?
HELL! I JUST WISH I WAS!
HERE. RUN THESE THROUGH WHATEVER DATA SOURCES YOU CAN GET. I'VE HAD A BIT OF A HISTORY WITH THE LAW. I'LL TURN UP.
COMPUTER RECORDS CAN BE ALTERED I'VE DONE IT MYSELF
AND THAT'S MY PROBLEM. THE MORE I SHOW UP, THE MORE WORDS GOING TO GET AROUND THAT THERE'S SOMEONE RUNNING AROUND BEING THE ATOM.

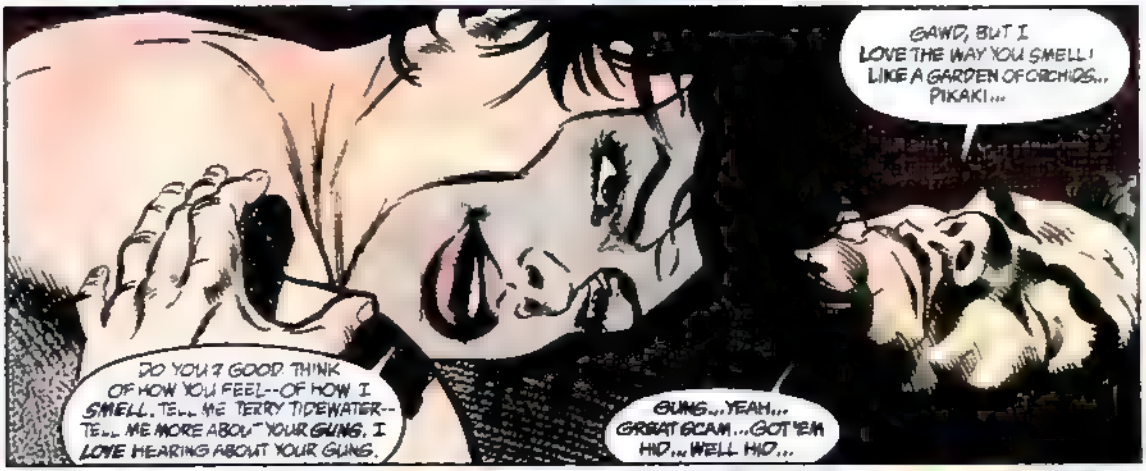
AND THAT WILL ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THOSE WHO KILLED RAY PALMER--
--AND THEN THEY'LL COME AFTER ME BECAUSE, LIKE YOU, THEY'LL THINK I AM PALMER, FAKING MY OWN DEATH.

IS THAT WHY YOU'RE WITH THE SQUAD?

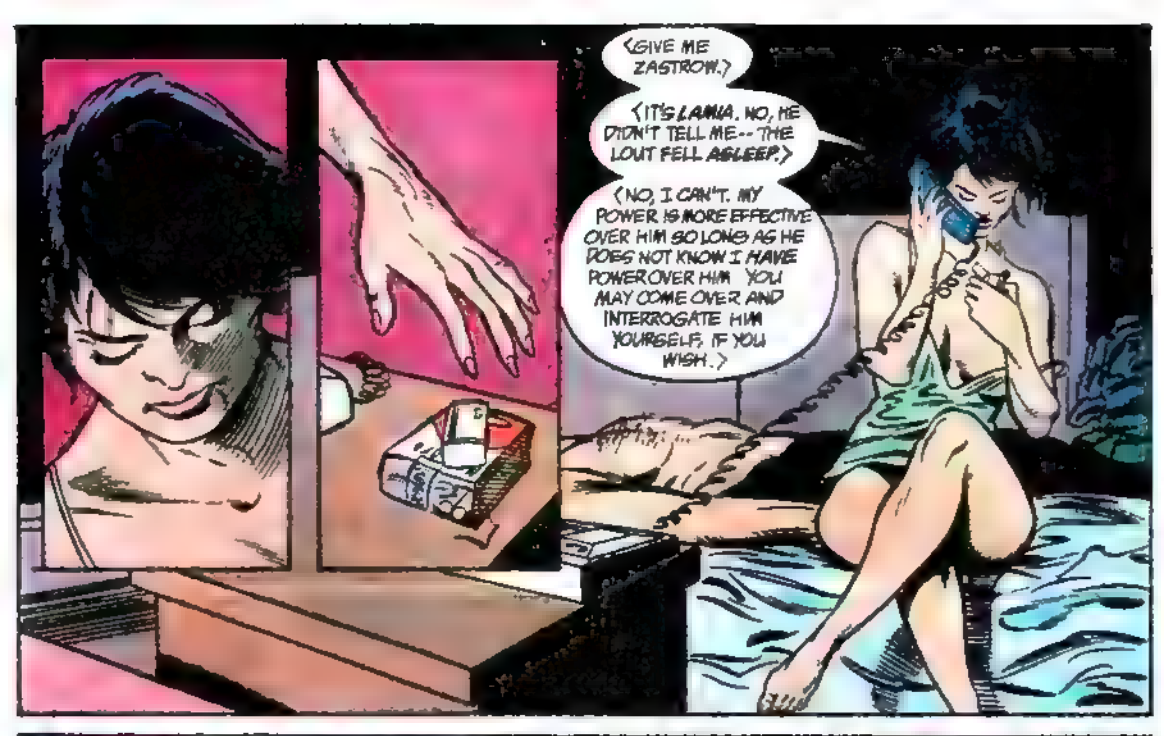

YEAH THE WALL'S TRYING TO GET A LINE ON PALMER'S KILLERS BEFORE THEY CAN GET ON ME BUT, SO FAR NOTHINGS PANNED OUT
MEANTIME, I'M HER "POCKET CAVALRY"--READY TO POP IN THROUGH THE RADIO SIGNAL TO LEND A HAND WHERE NEEDED.
LIKE TODAY I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD CHECK ON THE TEAM
EXCEPT FOR DEADSHOT HE CAN DIE ANY TIME HE WANTS

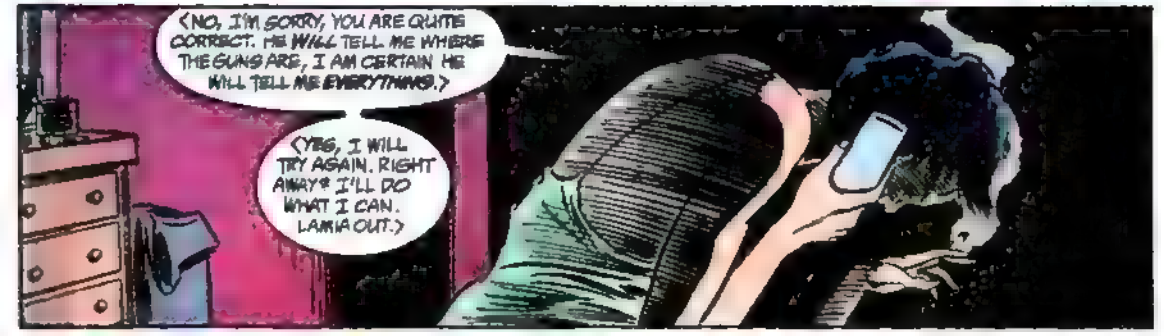
WHY?
HE KILLED MY FATHER

TOKYO!
BEER
SSAN
OI! OI! YU LITTLE BEAUTY!


GAWD, BUT I LOVE THE WAY YOU SMELL! LIKE A GARDEN OF ORCHIDS... PIKAKI...
DO YOU? GOOD. THINK OF HOW YOU FEEL--OF HOW I SMELL. TELL ME TERRY TIDEWATER--TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR GUNS. I LOVE HEARING ABOUT YOUR GUNS.
GUNS...YEAH... GREAT SCAM...GOT 'EM HID...WELL HID...

WHERE, TERRY TIDEWATER? WHERE?!
SKRZNXXX!


<GIVE ME ZASTROW.>
<IT'S LAMIA. NO, HE DIDN'T TELL ME -- THE LOUT FELL ASLEEP.>
<NO, I CAN'T. MY POWER IS MORE EFFECTIVE OVER HIM SO LONG AS HE DOES NOT KNOW I HAVE POWER OVER HIM. YOU MAY COME OVER AND INTERROGATE HIM YOURSELF, IF YOU WISH.>


<NO, I'M SORRY, YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT. HE WILL TELL ME WHERE THE GUNS ARE, I AM CERTAIN HE WILL TELL ME EVERYTHING.>
<YES, I WILL TRY AGAIN. RIGHT AWAY. I'LL DO WHAT I CAN. LAMIA OUT.>

TERRY! TERRY, DARLING, WAKE UP!
I NEED YOU, TERRY TIDEWATER!
HUH? WOZZAT?

OH, LOR'! NOT AGAIN!

CAMBODIA
WE'RE ABOUT OVER THE DROP ZONE. YOU GUYS CLEAR ON THE METHODS AND SIGNALS FOR PICK-UPS?
REASONABLY SO, I THINK.
CLAK!
DO SVIDANA, "COMRADES". BY THE TIME YOU GET TO EARTH, I WILL BE LONG GONE AWAY

THIS IS MADNESS! I TAKE IT HIS BODY CAN ABSORB THE IMPACT, BUT DOESN'T HE KNOW I CAN FLY?
WE ARE MOST AGGRIEVED. WE SHALL HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM
MY JOB.
WAIT! THERE IS NO NEED! I CAN DEAL WITH THIS!
AND WHO IS GOING TO BRING THE BAGGAGE?!

YO.

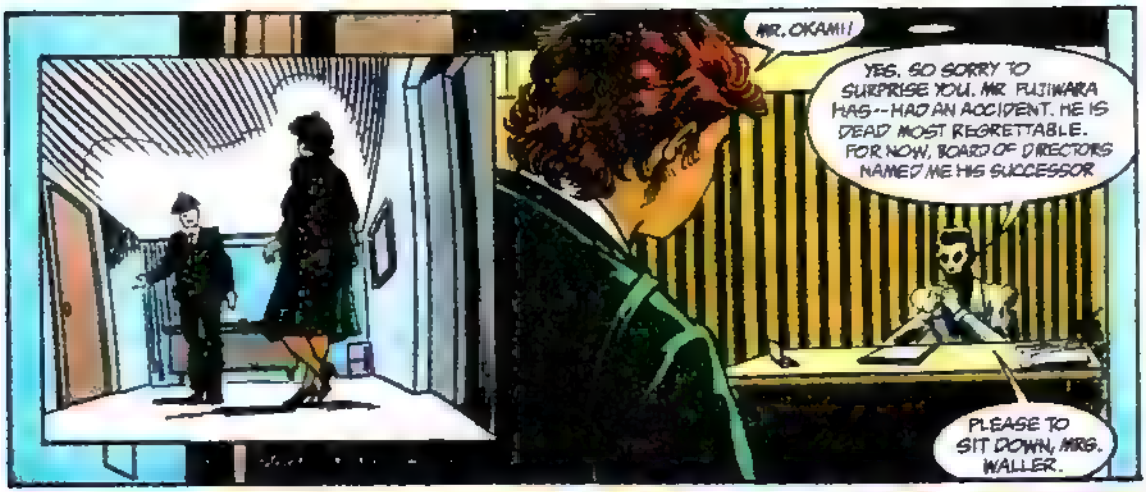
USE THE CHUTE.
YOU OPEN YOURS FIRST.

YOU ARE A FOOL, AMERICAN. I CAN SURVIVE IMPACT WITH THE GROUND! CAN YOU?

USE THE CHUTE OR YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE YOU HIT THE GROUND
GUARANTEED

<GO TELL THE COMMANDER WE HAVE VISITORS>
TOKYO
COSMOS
映画の

OKAMI - FUJIWARA'S SECRETARY -- SAYS OUR EMPLOYER HAS ASKED FOR A FACE-TO-FACE. THEY SENT A LIMO FOR ME.
I'M GOING TO BE SHUTTING OFF THE TRANSCEIVER FOR A WHILE, IN CASE THEY GOT MONITORING DEVICES. DON'T WANT THEM TO THINK WE'RE SPYING ON THEM. WALLER OUT.


MR. OKAMI!
YES. SO SORRY TO SURPRISE YOU. MR FUJIWARA HAS -- HAD AN ACCIDENT. HE IS DEAD. MOST REGRETTABLE. FOR NOW, BOARD OF DIRECTORS NAMED ME HIS SUCCESSOR.
PLEASE TO SIT DOWN, MRS. WALLER.

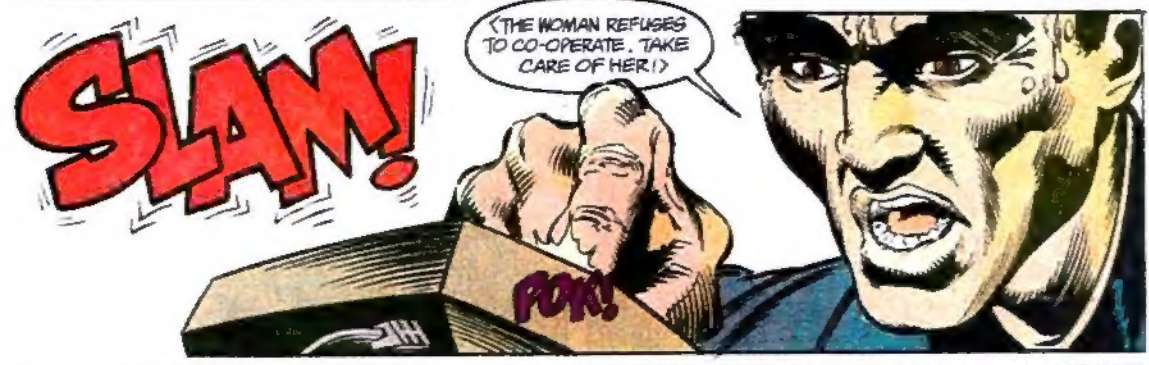
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
WHAT IS IT, MR OKAMI? I'M PRETTY BUSY RIGHT NOW.

SO TO BUSINESS, THEN.
THE BOARD AND I HAVE BEEN RE-EVALUATING MY PREDECESSOR'S ARRANGEMENT WITH YOU AND FEEL ANY ACTION WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME.
WE THEREFORE HAVE DECIDED -- RELUCTANTLY -- TO CANCEL THE CONTRACT.

IS THAT RIGHT?
WELL, OUR CONTRACT WAS WITH MR. FUJIWARA, THE MONEY WAS PAID OUT OF HIS OWN PRIVATE ACCOUNT, AND THE SQUAD DOESN'T GIVE REFUNDS. WE'RE GOING AHEAD, MR. OKAMI.

AND IF YOU TRY TO GET IN OUR WAY, WE'LL CHECK INTO YOUR PAST--
--FIND OUT HOW A JUMPED-UP PRIVATE SECRETARY MANAGED TO GET CONTROL OF A BIG MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATION LIKE THIS ONE.
THAT WE'LL DO FOR FREE.

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I GOT THINGS TO DO.


SLAM!
<THE WOMAN REFUSES TO CO-OPERATE. TAKE CARE OF HER!>
POK!

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KRAK!

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

NEXT: THINGS GET WORSE!

SUICIDE NOTES

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So you're all thinking, "Nahh. They'd never do that. Amanda's too tough to get into serious trouble."

Well, don't bet the rent, kids...

The mail for #50 is still pouring in, and it's overwhelmingly positive. It's good to know that there are fans who can appreciate all the extra effort our creators heap into their stories. Please keep the cards and letters rolling.

Before we start, however, there was confusion here over the "Next Issue Box" at the end of #51. It accidentally referred to this issue (#54), and not #52 (the Doctor Light story) as it should have. I'm not sure at this moment what last issue said about this issue, but it probably will all work out in the wash anyway.

Here's more mail about #50. I'll try to keep my mumblings to a minimum this month.

Dear Mr. Raspler,

SUICIDE SQUAD #50 was worth the wait. I had anticipated a story going back to the Squad's origins, but I never dreamed it would be done this way. Ostrander & Yale's story seemed very different from what I've seen in recent months. The flashbacks were handled well, and suspense was in full force.

The artwork was as spectacular as ever, with Isherwood, McDonnell, Miehm, and Kesel meshing styles perfectly, and giving a perfect display for this landmark issue.

Tim Durbin
(No address given)

* * * * *

Hey, Bob—

First, welcome back!!—even if it is just for this one issue.

I liked SUICIDE SQUAD #50, "Debt of Honor," a lot. An awful lot.

When I first heard that this story would feature Rick Flag and Karin Grave I just sorta raised my eyebrows, thought about it for a minute and said "okay." But I was wrong. It was much more than okay. It was spectacular - -

- - as were the visuals by Isherwood, McDonnell,and Miehm. And most especially Karl Kesel. Karl's the *best* inker in the industry and I've really missed his input and overall contribution to the title. Is there any chance of his returning to the title on an ongoing monthly basis?

Also, is there any chance that either Nemesis or Nightshade might choose to remain with the team? I know they're a couple of favorites of John and Kim, and with Vixen on sick leave (?) and Ravan dead, they would most assuredly shore up the remainder of the team. Also, where the hell was m'boy Vertigo and the new Atom operative?

But...Japan?

Can't wait to see next issue's spotlight on Deadshot.

Happy Anniversary, gang. Here's to the *next* 50 issues.

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Excellent. An old home day for the Squad. Who would've guessed even the members killed in action would return for an appearance? Unless you recognized Mindboggler kidnapping Rick's child (which I didn't), I don't see how anyone could foresee a return of the dead!

Anyway, this was a fantastic vehicle both for new readers, as well as the next fifty issues. It showed parts of the past Squads, the present Squad, and tantalized us by not showing any of the future. A great story. But Dan, I still missed the Haunted Tank.

Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Avenue
Portland, CT 06480

So did I, Sir Jon. So did I.

* * * * *

Dear John, Kim, and Company,

Has it really already been 50 issues? I can't believe it! Seems like just yesterday when I was blown away by that first issue of SUICIDE SQUAD! Time flies when you're having fun, as they say. (It's a tired cliché but, in this case, it's very true.)

When I saw this issue's anniversary cover, I fantasized that the Squad would be teaming up with deceased teammates in the afterworld for a supernatural adventure (remember those scenes with the ghost of Dr. Light?). While this wasn't quite the team-up I'd envisioned (moldy corpses—eeeeuuuuuwwwwl), it was still one helluva battle, and proved that the action in this book hasn't abated one bit since that first issue. John and Kim have an uncanny knack for creating whole epics out of plot threads—in this case, a plot thread that not even the book's readers were aware of. Jeff Bright's revenge and Rick Flag's legacy were entirely feasible in comic book terms, and made for a great anniversary blow-out. Along with the regular cast, I really enjoyed the return of Nemesis, Nightshade, and...the Enchantress is back! The Enchantress is back! Well, sort of. I'm definitely intrigued by what will become of Eve Eden's latest predicament. Also, that rare, tender moment with Amanda in the very last panel was alone well worth the price of admission. The panels at the top of the page are also noteworthy because of the single names uttered by Eve and Mark as they resigned themselves to do what they had to do, out of love for Rick and Karin.

Of course, the most exciting part of this issue was the use of all the best Suicide Squad artists. Their work gave the story its impact, and the transitions from one scene to the next were so smooth I hardly noticed the change in artists. I hope we fans can consider this a preview of the quality of work we'll see in future issues!

Another thing I've always enjoyed about SUICIDE SQUAD is its relevancy to the world we live in. It will be interesting to see if the war in the Persian Gulf will make it into your storylines (I'm sure it will), especially after the recent Dybbuk storyline. I'd like to mention how much I enjoyed the Oracle two-parter, also.

Thanks to everyone on your staff for an incredibly fun series. I can't wait to experience the next 50 issues!

Sincerely,
Neil Ahlquist
Minneapolis, MN

* * * * *

Dear Dan:

"Debt of Honor" was a wonderful story to celebrate the fiftieth issue of SUICIDE SQUAD. The references and flashbacks to the first Suicide Squad integrated smoothly with the actions of the current Squad. It was a nice touch bringing in the charter members for this adventure, even if the Enchantress's inclusion was brief and a bit gratuitous. The flashbacks of Karin were a bit sad, considering her ultimate fate, and the zombie-ish Jihad made a concrete connection between this issue and the first issue of this series. The Mindboggler zombie reminded me of Ifrit, and I wonder if Amanda and her team were ever able to tame it. It and Dybbuk would make one helluva team, wouldn't you say? I really liked Nemesis's corporate masquerade, but I was even more pleased to see Nightshade again. She's too good a character to remain strictly an occasional "guest star." I hope there are plans for more regular appearances, if not in this book then some other, of Eve and Nightshade.

Koschei the Deathless is a great new villain. With his history in the original Suicide Squad and his fearsome appearance and power, I hope that his return is planned for sometime in the future. I must ask if John and/or Kim borrowed his name from Gary Jennings's book, *Spangle*. It featured a deformed man with the same name. And in both instances, the character was memorable.

The art was great this issue. It was so nice to see many SS alumni return to work on this anniversary story. Between all the artists, the guesting of Bob Greenberger on the letter column, and John and Kim's continuous and excellent run on this series, I get the feeling that SUICIDE SQUAD is not only a good book to read, but also a fun book to work on.

Continued success for the next fifty issues!

Jim Kelly
29 West Melrose Street
Valley Stream, NY 11580-4503

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Re: SUICIDE SQUAD #50

A sort of reunion of old friends leads to vintage SS adventure. Brilliantly done, just the way any "anniversary" issue should be done. No flaws, no complaints.

Let me get this straight. Enchantress essentially possesses Nightshade if Eve loses control of the succubus (Enchantress) dwelling within her, right? Is it possible this can be played up at some point? Also, with Nemesis back, can he be coaxed into returning on a more periodic basis? With his gift for disguise, Tom Tresser is really the best member of the Squad in the history of this incarnation. He gives the Squad that "Mission: Impossible" feel that has thankfully been retained even after he left the team. I'd love it if he either returned, even as a part-timer, or got, ahem, *his own book*. Get the point?

Here's to hoping Amanda succeeds with her experiment with Cliff Carmichael and turns the cyberpunk Thinker into a possibly valuable future member of the Squad. Cliff's been at the bottom of the popularity poll ever since his debut in FIRESTORM #1 (1978), so he needs to literally turn his life around and gain some much needed respect. There's hope for him yet.

See you in thirty.

Jacob Gilbert
118 Fourth Street, Apt. 1
Troy, NY 12180

No Tom Tresser this time around, Jacob, but keep your eyes peeled over the months to come.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Somebody—be it writer, artist, colorist, letterer, editor or a combination of the bunch—deserves some sort of reward for infernal cleverness in creating issue #50 of SUICIDE SQUAD. Tying together the original Squad, the new Squad, both incarnations of the Jihad and (in a weird way) the battle between Bronze Tiger and Ravan sounded impossible (especially as so many members of the Jihad and original Squad were so very dead). And, lo and behold, Koschei has been following the Squad around recovering their fallen since the series' outset! There was Shrike and Mindboggler and the fallen team members from the Doom Patrol crossover all hanging out with our good dead friends from the Jihad. Obviously, somebody has been planning this issue since before Flag's death, before the second appearance of the Jihad, for that matter. This leaves me wondering how much further into the future this book is plotted, and leaves me amazed that, in a fictional universe that is nevertheless, forced to change with time, sales-related events (such as enormous crossovers à la INVASION! or MILLENNIUM) and editorial decisions, this lengthy plotting can actually be implemented. Also, lest it goes unmentioned, the Enchantress's return was most welcome. Good luck controlling her this time.

Thanks for listening...

RKevin Doyle
1630 Kewalo St. #108
Honolulu, HI 96822

Yeah, Kev. We planned it all right from the start. Every last minute little detail. John and Kim are on top of it all, pal. Ahem.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

When you guys say "Family Reunion" you're not kidding. Near as I can tell, that's just about the whole original team (from issue #1, that is) that showed up (if you can include Mindboggler and Flag. It's so great to be home.

The issue was simply phenomenal. I was ecstatic while reading it. You know, if anybody asks me, I can truthfully tell them that SUICIDE SQUAD is the most fun a guy can have with his pants on and the leather left in the closet.

Thanks for the great book,
David S. Gallacher
4151 Monarch Way
Salt Lake City, UT 84124

Hey, watch that innuendo, Dave. This is a family letter column!

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Congratulations: SUICIDE SQUAD #50 was everything an anniversary issue should be. We were taken back to the first issue and even before, while we also saw some old favorites—both dead and alive. A quick Zombie countdown identifies Ravan, Manticore, Mindboggler, the original Thinker, Weasel, Psi and Shrike—did I miss anyone? Very ingenious use of dead characters, reinforcing the idea that this is *not* a book of needless resurrections.

Of the surviving Squad, I enjoyed seeing Nemesis and Nightshade (and, for that matter, Enchantress) again. If Nightshade can't become a regular here, then how about giving her a miniseries? Luke McD on pencils, of course...

And Boomerang's role was hilarious, as always. I don't care what anybody says, he's still my favorite Squaddy, my favorite quote being "Oi! Where the bugger am I and which of you bastards are responsible for my bein' here!" Now, *there's* comic relief for you...

Happy fiftieth, and thanks once more for making this one of my favorite books because of its consistently unpredictable nature and wonderful characterization.

Rock and Roll,
Rol Hirst
W. Yorks
England

* * * * *

Dear Suicidals:

When I picked up SUICIDE SQUAD #50, I expected it to be full of surprises, and I wasn't disappointed. If anything, my hopes were exceeded!

First, let me say how thrilled I was to see Nemesis again. As I've said before, he's too good a character to let go to waste. If he's not going to appear here regularly, may I suggest you give him his own series, or at least a miniseries?

When I asked to see the Enchantress again, I didn't expect it to be quite like this! I had almost forgotten that the Succubus inside Eve Eden was the Enchantress! Please, don't let this lie fallow! There are a lot of possibilities in this development. Have Eve consult with June Moone and Madame Xanadu, among others, on what to do about the evil inside.

Did anyone on the Squad ever think that if they treated Digger with a little more respect, he might be a little more willing to help out? NAAAAAH!!!!!!

The one "person" I never expected to see again was Ravan. It almost sickened me that you dug the poor guy up to fight Ben again. Possibly the best plot twist of many.

The last thing the Squad needs is another unlikeable character. Cliff Carmichael will need a lot of improvement before I'll be willing to accept him as a member of the Squad—that is, if that's what Amanda has planned.

Finally, Amanda comforting Rick Flag's son was one of the best scenes in Squad history. It's moments like that that make this book one of my favorites. By all means, keep it up!

Oh, yeah, before I forget, thanks for the compliment in the letter column of #49, Dan. It's nice to be appreciated.

Julio Diaz
8713 Linda Court
Tampa, FL 33604

P.S. Adam Cray is Ray Palmer. Adam sounds the same as Atom, and the last three letters of Cray are Ray. Plastic surgery and hair dye can change anyone's looks, but you haven't fooled me!

Thanks for writing, Julio.

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THE *REAL* NEXT ISSUE box:

SUICIDE SQUAD #55 is basically (basically, mind you) 22 pages of breakneck action. We're talking about action the way only the Squad can bring it to you. What happened to Amanda? What's going on with Vertigo, Gort and Lawton? What about Nightshade? And y'all just KNOW that the Bronze Tiger's going to be up to something when his teammates are fighting the Yakuza...

Don't miss this one, folks.

Fair warning: Read SUICIDE SQUAD #55 with sunglasses on. You'll get flash-burns if you don't!

—Dan Raspler
Runnin' fer cover!